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SUBJECT: JOINT MONITORING GROUP TASK FORCE MEETING
OF AUGUST 22, 2008

¶1. (SBU) Summary: MONUC/DDRRR reported that in July, it had transferred 97 FDLR members to Rwanda, although Rwanda classified fewer than half that number as ex-combatants. The GDRC did not object, as long as those repatriated were properly accepted in Rwanda. The Rwandan side stressed the importance of field trips to the DRC but expressed safety concerns. End summary

¶2. (SBU) The 36th Joint Monitoring Group Task Force met in Goma August 22, focusing on continued repatriation of FDLR members in July, with a presentation by MONUC/DDRRR, and on future field visits. There were minor disagreements about minutes from the previous meeting, but the mood was relaxed and convivial. While the GDRC was represented by its usual head, Colonel Augustin Mamba, the Rwandans were represented at a lower level than usual.

¶3. (SBU) Ndiaga Diagne of MONUC/DDRRR said that in July it had transferred 97 FDLR members (61 ex-combatants, 35 dependents, one undetermined) to Rwanda. Rwanda, however, classified only 47 of these as ex-combatants, with 49 classified as civilians and one still to be determined. MONUC, by contrast, characterized all FDLR who had disarmed as ex-combatants. The 47 were transferred to the charge of the Rwandan demobilization and reintegration commission, the others to UNHCR.

¶4. (SBU) Colonel Mamba said that the DRC did not care about combatant-civilian distinctions, but wanted to be sure that all were properly accepted in Rwanda. The Rwandan delegation told Mamba that those who were declared civilians and who had been transferred to UNHCR were not being treated as refugees in Rwanda. Rather, UNCHR was overseeing their reintegration into Rwanda. Diagne said that 75 of these 97 had been transferred from North Kivu, the remainder from South Kivu. Diagne said that MONUC had greatly improved its ability to detect "recycled repatriates."

¶5. (SBU) Concerning field visits by the Task Force, the Rwandan delegation noted, on the one hand, its desire for more visits to DRC than to Rwanda. On the other hand, the delegations raised concerns about security during such trips. It recounted aspects of previous DRC trips that had caused concern. Examples raised were those of an RUD member bearing a weapon on the visit to Kasiki, an FARDC commander at Rutshuru stating that he believed the FDLR was well-informed about the Task Force visit, and an FARDC commander at Mwenga stating that the FARDC believed that it was too dangerous to venture off the road on which they were traveling. Colonel Mamba insisted that all visits had been fully safe, as would all future trips inside the DRC.

¶6. (SBU) Regarding future travel, the Rwandan delegation said it would not be useful simply to continue visiting Rwanda's center at Mutobo. The Rwandans suggested that trips need not alternate, but it was nonetheless contemplating arranging a visit to its center for child combatants and another to the UNHCR transit camp. Colonel Mamba agreed that the DRC was the "main theater of operations" and that, therefore, it was not essential to keep to an alternating

schedule. However, the DRC was not ready for another visit. Task Force Chairman Bernard Sexe noted that trips to Rwanda were important to demonstrate to the FDLR that the Task Force was working closely together and that former FDLR members were being properly reintegrated in Rwanda.

¶7. (SBU) The GDRC reiterated its request to move the meeting from Friday to the middle of the week, because of difficult airline connections and because Friday was the most important day to be in Kinshasa for government meetings. The Rwandan delegation said it could not contemplate breaking up its work week but might consider a Monday meeting. The GDRC said Monday would be more difficult than Friday. There was no consensus, so the meeting day remains Friday.

¶8. (SBU) Finally, both sides agreed that, in the next meeting, they would draw up an evaluation for the upcoming Joint Monitoring Group meeting of the progress thus far in carrying out the Nairobi communique.

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